

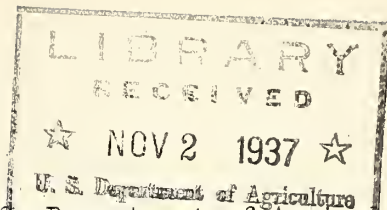
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J. H. R. R.

DUAL-PURPOSE TREES



An interview between Morse Salisbury, U. S. Department of Agriculture, and Wyman Smith of the Forest Service on the National Farm and Home Hour, Monday, October 25, 1937, broadcast by the National Broadcasting Company and a network of 70 associated radio stations.

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MORSE SALISBURY:

Today Wyman Smith of the Forest Service is with us. I have asked him to tell us about dual-purpose trees and naval stores. About 70 per cent of the world's supply of naval stores is produced today in the longleaf and slash pine areas of the eight Southern States along the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts. The crop is valued at about 40 million dollars. As you know, naval stores is the term that was originally applied to pitch, tar, and turpentine produced from the gum of the pine trees.

Years ago the chief uses of naval stores, especially pitch and tar were on ships. But nowadays naval stores supply us with turpentine for painting and for use in insecticides, fumigants, perfumes, and medicines; with rosin for paper sizing and making old fashioned laundry soap.

WYMAN SMITH:

We also use these products in making safety glass, printing inks, shoe polish, grease, leather dressing, sealing wax, and insulation, linoleum, oilcloth, roofing, matches, and varnish.

SALISBURY:

Well, turning out a product so essential to the industries of modern civilization, you'd think turpentine farmers would be in a pretty strong economic position.

SMITH:

You'd think so. But it's a bitterly competitive business. Production has chronically outrun demand in the past several years. The returns weren't enough in some years to show any profit over operating expenses. As the depression deepened, the turpentine farmers were hit just like other farmers -- maybe a little harder.

SALISBURY:

That's a familiar and painful story in all farming sections. In order to get enough cash to keep the family going and avoid losing title to the land, farmers had to mine their soil to produce larger and larger crops that brought in less and less.

SMITH:

And that's precisely what happened in naval stores. Only they mined tree resources as well as soil resources. Farmers turpented young trees, hung two and three cups on a tree, used heavy and coarse streaks, and worked an overlong season.

SALISBURY:

Well, what was the answer?

(over)

SMITH:

There wasn't any answer until the centralizing powers of Government were made available to organized groups of farmers under the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933.

SALISBURY:

Yes, I recall reporting the naval stores program under the original Agricultural Adjustment Act four years ago. The Forest Service assisted in formulating a gum naval stores marketing agreement under AAA.

SMITH:

Yes, we did.

SALISBURY:

Then, when the Agricultural Adjustment Act was invalidated in the Hoosac Mills decision, and was followed by the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act, the Forest Service was delegated the job of administering the program which was set up under the Act.

SMITH:

Correct. The object is to enable turpentine farmers to use their land in a way that'll conserve it. In order to make up for part of the out-of-pocket cost of farming in a conserving way instead of in a wasteful way, the agricultural conservation program provides payments to the operators who take part in the program.

SALISBURY:

Suppose you report the progress made under these programs toward conserving this great natural resource -- the dual-purpose pines, and the land where they grow.

SMITH:

Well, during the past two years the program has been announced a little late. But even with that handicap, farmers operating one-fourth of the business have taken part in 1937, and have followed conserving practices in harvesting the gum crop on a considerable portion of the 28 million acres in active production.

SALISBURY:

Briefly, Wy, what are these conserving practices?

SMITH:

There are three main conservation provisions. First, the producers taking part in the program do not turpentine trees less than nine inches in diameter. Second, on the trees that they do turpentine, they make cuts or streaks of the right size to prolong the productive life of the tree. Third, they protect the woods against fire.

SALISBURY:

Now, for the benefit of our listeners who aren't familiar with the turpentine farming business, I'll ask you to explain how a farmer operates, and why the practices under the agricultural conservation program make for conservation.

SMITH:

Very well. In turpentineing a tree the first cut is made about a foot from the base of the tree and other cuts are made above that to form what we call the "face". The gum oozes out of the cut or, as the turpentine farmer calls it -- the "streak". It is collected in cups fastened on the tree below the face. That gum is the turpentine farmer's cash crop.

SALISBURY:

Now we understand how he operates. Next tell us what are the conserving methods of operation.

SMITH:

I've already stated them and they are the methods for which payments are made under the agricultural conservation program. The reason why payments are made for turpentineing trees only nine inches or more in diameter is because turpentineing smaller trees stunts their growth, and cuts the yield on both gum and timber.

SALISBURY:

In other words the land owner and the Nation get less per acre of woodland when you turpentine young trees.

SMITH:

That's it in a nutshell.

SALISBURY:

Now explain why payments are made for limiting the size of the cuts.

SMITH:

That's because cuts that are too deep and coarse injure the trees and shorten their productive life.

SALISBURY:

And it is fairly obvious to everyone why payments are made for protecting the woods against fire.

SMITH:

I suppose so. But it's a very important part of the program and I might give you a few more comments on it. Fire in the piney woods reduces the fertility of the soil; and fire also damages its physical condition. In the third place, fire injures the trees that are being turpentineed. When the face of a turpentine tree is burned, insects and decay enter and trees are blown down by windstorms. Finally, repeated burning cuts down the stand of trees per acre because fire kills off young trees needed to make a future stand. Our foresters have shown that with proper management the trees to provide a crop of 10,000 faces for the production of turpentine could be maintained on from 50 to 70 acres. But with the present stands, it takes an average of from 500 to 700 acres to provide enough trees to give that many turpentine producing faces.

SALISBURY:

Also, bringing back a good stand of dual-purpose pines would help prevent erosion. All of our listeners know from hearing the story many times that trees in a forest stand give the soil maximum protection against erosion.

(More)



Now, Wy, let's get down to cases for the benefit of listeners who are turpentine farmers, and tell them what the rates of payment for the various conserving practices are under the 1938 agricultural conservation program.

SMITH:

All right. Here are the practices and rates of payment:

For cooperation in the 1938 program, naval stores farmers will be paid one cent per face for all faces worked under approved practices, and five cents per face for faces taken out of operation on small trees as required by the provisions of the program.

SALISBURY:

One more thing, Wy. If a turpentine farmer wants to take part in this program this year, how should he go about it?

SMITH:

Within the next few days every producer of whom the Forest Service has a record will receive a copy of the bulletin and a work sheet. Then producers can attend regional meetings. Those will be held at central points throughout the naval stores belt. Speakers will explain the details of the program. Producers who decide to cooperate can mail the work sheet to the regional office in Atlanta, Georgia, or to the nearest district office in Savannah, Jacksonville, or Pensacola. Inspectors will visit producers at their farms and help them line up their operations.

SALISBURY:

(Repetition of instructions for participation in the ACP, and conclude with thanks to Smith for bringing the audience up to date on the progress made on conserving naval stores resources.)

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